

Message Text

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TO USIA WASHDC

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TAGS: SCUL, IT

SUBJECT: MAJOR BICENTENNIAL EVENT

FOR: STATE CU/WE, CU/ARTS

USIA IEU, ICS SCHNEIDER, IOP WOOTON

1. AFTER MUCH TACTUFUL CONTACT WORK, POST HAS ASCERTAINED GENUINE ENTHUSIASM PEGGY GUGGENHEIM TO MAKE HER FAMOUS VENICE-BASED COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY PAINTING AND SCULPTURE AVAILABLE TO CIRCULATE IN VARIOUS ITALIAN CITIES UNDER BICENTENNIAL RUBRIC.

2. WHILE THIS 200-PIECES COLLECTION, VALUED AT THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS, CONTAINS A WIDE REPRESENTATION OF AMERICAN ARTISTS, IT IS ESSENTIALLY DEDICATED TO WORLD ART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. THE AMERICANS IN IT ARE RELATED TO WORLD STANDARDS AND THUS PRESTIGE IS MAXIMAL. MORE IMPORTANT IS FACT THAT THIS COLLECTION BY A SINGLE AMERICAN IS ITSELF A SYMBOL OF THE U.S. ROLE IN THE ARTS IN THE LAST THIRTY YEARS. AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PRIVATE COLLECTIONS IN THE WORLD, SECOND ONLY PERHAPS TO THE HIRSHHORN, THE COLLECTION ITSELF AND ITS COLORFUL OWNER WOULD BE THE STARTS OF THE EVENT.

3. TWO-THIRDS OF THIS COLLECTION OPENED AT THE GRAND PALAIS IN PARIS LAST SPRING, FIRST SHOWING EVER AWAY FROM VENICE. ITALIANS FEEL STRONGLY THAT ITALIAN OPENING MUST TAKE PLACE IN ROME AND ROME MUSEUM MODERN ART, UNDER NEW ACTIVIST LEADERSHIP, UNCLASSIFIED

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ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT POSSIBILITY. HOWEVER YEAR COMMITTED SO

THAT ONLY TIME AVAILABLE IS ON OR ABOUT DECEMBER 1. IDEA WOULD BE TO PRODUCE ROME IN DECEMBER, MILAN IN FEBRUARY, THEN RETURN TO VENICE BY APRIL 1. IF THESE TWO SHOWINGS SUCCESSFUL THEN WE COULD PLAN FOR THREE MAJOR CITIES IN 1976-77. BUT GEARING UP BY DECEMBER 1 WILL REQUIRE MAJOR EFFORT ALL CONCERNED.

4. COSTS ARE PRINCIPAL FACTOR. CATALOG, A MAJOR ITEM, COULD PROBABLY BE HANDLED BY AN ITALIAN PUBLISHER ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS, AT NO COST. ITALIAN PARTICIPATION, AT EARLIEST STAGE OF NEGOTIATION, WOULD BE LIMITED TO HANGING AND SECURITY, ALTHOUGH WE SUSPECT TRANSPORT WOULD BE NEGOTIABLE AS AN ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION.

5. REMAINING COST ITEM IS INSURANCE, ESTIMATED AT ANYWHERE BETWEEN TWENTY AND THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS PER SHOWING, BASED ON EVALUATION OF THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS FOR COLLECTION. POSSIBILITY OF PARTICIPATION BY ITALIAN GOVERNMENT UNDER BICENTENNIAL RUBRIC NOT FULLY TO BE DISCOUNTED, BUT THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ALREADY MOUNT HIGH AND WE BELIEVE THIS WILL BE DIFFICULT POINT TO WIN.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: A) SEEK ADVICE AS TO WHETHER SPECIAL BICENTENNIAL FUNDS MIGHT BE MADE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT HIS EFFORT. B) SEEK INFORMATION LEADING TO ANY ALTERNATE IDEAS FOR HANDLING INSURANCE QUESTION AT LESS EXPENSE, INCLUDING SOME FORM OF GUARANTEE WORKED OUT BY TWO GOVERNMENTS. C) (FOR IEU) POST NEEDS AGENCY SUPPORT REGARDING POST COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES, IN CLEAR RECOGNITION WHAT THIS WILL REPRESENT NOW AND INTO FY-77. IF WE PULL THIS OFF, IT WILL MEAN, IN MANPOWER TERMS, THAT THE CAO WILL BE BUSY MORE OR LESS FULL TIME ON THIS PROJECT ALONE DURING THE NEXT TWO MONTHS WITH NEGOTIATIONS AND HANDHOLDING OPERATIONS; IT WILL MEAN AN AMERICAN EXPERT WILL HAVE TO BE LOCATED AND CONTRACTED FOR ARTISTIC COORDINATION, ESPECIALLY IN PRODUCTION OF CATALOG; IT MEANS A TOP-LEVEL ITALIAN STAFFER WILL HAVE TO BE DETACHED TO COVER THIS PROJECT FULL-TIME, WITH CLERICAL AND OTHER BACKUP AS REQUIRED. ALL THESE INVESTMENTS WILL BE MADE AT EXPENSE OF OTHER PROGRAM POSSIBILITIES. IN TERMS MATERIAL RESOURCES, LIKELY THAT GOE WILL HAVE TO BE TAPPED AT VARIOUS KEY MOMENTS DURING PROCESS, TO CUT CORNERS AND MOVE THINGS ALONG BY SLASHING ITALIAN REDTAPE. TOTAL SUCH FUNDING REQUIREMENT UNCLASSIFIED

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UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME.

7. AGAINST THIS COST MUST WEIGHT POTENTIAL EFFECT. THE GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION HAS NEVER BEEN SEEN IN ITALY OUTSIDE VENICE. IN THIS VISUALLY-ORIENTED COUNTRY, DURING THIS BICENTENNIAL PERIOD, A GREAT IMPACT IS ASSURED. WE NOTE THAT THE PRESENT RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBIT OF MAN RAY, U.S.-BORN SURREALIST, IS ATTRACTING HUGE CROWDS IN ROME TODAY. OR FOR ANOTHER COMPARATIVE

INSIGHT, KINGPIN OF VAST FRENCH CULTURAL EFFORT IN ITALY IS
ANNUAL SHOW AT FRENCH ACADEMY. LAST YEAR A WORLD-SCALE SHOW
OF BRAQUE, THIS YEAR OF COROT. THE GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION
WOULD OUTSHINE THIS BY SEVERAL ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE.

8. IN SUM, A MAJOR UNDERTAKING WITH MAJOR POTENTIAL EFFECT,
ON WHICH WE MUST MOVE IMMEDIATELY AND FORCEFULLY. REQUEST SOONEST
IN-PRINCIPLE ANSWER AND SPECIAL EFFORT CLARIFY FUNDING POSSIBILI-
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